THE VOICE OF THE ORIENT

The religious life in India is more intense than in other lands. Nothing else sways her people. As in England the political note is loudest, and people get hotter at election times than at any other, so in India the affairs of this life are all subordinated to that of the life to come. It is true that again the influence of the great sages has waned and only the shell remains of what was once indeed and in truth, a great spiritual religion. In the old days a raja on his throne, when a brahman, perhaps in rags, entered the room, had instantly to descend and, prostrating before him, obey his commands, for India was then under spiritual rule. And the brahman then, as his name implies, was indeed a spiritual teacher.

His life was spent successively in her four stages laid down by Manu—of student, householder, hermit and ascetic. To-day the latter two divisions of the brahman's life have been allowed to lapse. After initiation the brahman spends some years at the feet of his teacher,

and Manu says the guru who brings spiritual light to the pupil, is to be held dearer even than his natural father and mother. When the teacher considers the pupil ready he is admitted to the order of householders, and his

 marriage